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### Sustainability Across the Curriculum

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# Academic Forum on Sustainability

April 2016

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# Thank you to our co-sponsors

- Office of the Provost
- University Senate
- GSA
- SA
- Office of Sustainability

# Sustainability

Two key understandings:

1. Sustainability needs to be integrated into our curriculum, operations, research and engagement (Sustainability around the C.O.R.E.)
2. Sustainability involves much more than environmental issues. In essence, there are three pillars; social, economic and environmental concerns

# Sustainability /Senate History

- An environmental task force was established in 2006 by President Kermit Hall
- This focused on providing recommendations that would make our campus operations greener and promote sustainable behaviors
- The Senate passed a resolution on environmental sustainability through the University Planning and Policy Council, introduced by Jon Jacklet in 2007, which mainly focused on campus operations and planning
- Elements of green building and sustainable practices have become integrated into operations and engagement activities

## Sustainability Academics

Today we seek to foster a conversation about how we can look at the academic offerings related to sustainability in a more strategic way

# UAlbany Definition of Sustainability

- Sustainability entails recognizing one's membership in the broader social and ecological community, exhibiting appreciation of and respect for others and the natural world, and acting justly to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of human communities and natural systems.

● *Grunstra, Kleppel, Lewis, Smith-Howard*

Society – Community	Environment - Stewardship	Economics - Equity
Human interaction	Interaction with the natural world	Ecological valuation
Environmental Justice	Preservation of Environment	Valuation of Externalities
Quality of Life	Climate Change	Lifecycle Analysis
Human Health	Carbon Footprint	Fair Cost Accounting
Education	Prevent Pollution	Employment Security
Mental and Social Well-Being	Conservation of Resources	Fair Compensation
Crime Prevention		Poverty
Human Rights		Labor rights
Community Enhancement		Socio-economic inequities
Development of Social Culture		



# Assessing Sustainability

- The Office of Sustainability conducts a comprehensive assessment every three years in conjunction with our national professional organization, AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education)
- This assessment, called STARS, (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System) was first conducted in July of 2012 and UAlbany received a Silver Rating
- Our last rating was completed in January of 2016 when we received a Gold Rating

# Assessing Sustainability Academics

## Curriculum Overview

- We received 54.5% (21.89/40 points) of the points. This is an improvement from our last rating in 2012 when we garnered 38% of the curriculum points
- Our main increase came in the increase in the number of courses identified as sustainability focused or related
- The average STARS rating for this section is 54.49%

# Assessing Sustainability Academics

- To assess the number of sustainability courses, a database was developed based on how their descriptions listed in the undergraduate and graduate course bulletins aligned with the university definition of sustainability
- Overall 9% of the courses listed in the bulletins contained an element of sustainability
- 86% of our departments offer at least one sustainability related course
- 67% of departments have faculty engaged in sustainability related research

# Assessing Sustainability Academics

## Caveats

- These numbers don't include special topics courses, independent studies, thesis, practicums and the like
- These numbers may not reflect what is actually being taught (description not reflective of course material)
- These numbers may not reflect what is being offered
- Spring 2016, 55 courses were identified as sustainability related (less than 1%)
- General education courses: 29 current offerings relate to sustainability

# Assessing Sustainability Academics

Areas where we did not receive points:

Learning Outcomes (objectives)

- While some departments do have learning outcomes (objectives) related to sustainability, they reach a small percentage of our students, thus the reason for the low score

Sustainability Literacy Assessment

- We do not conduct sustainability literacy assessments on a scale that would allow us to receive any points for this credit (or do not have information about)

# Assessing Sustainability Academics

Areas where we received full points:

## Undergraduate Programs

- We have several programs where sustainability is a focus and included in their descriptions including (Atmospheric and Environmental Science, Interdisciplinary studies [Env Sci concentration], Geography, Globalization and minors (Sustainability, Globalization studies and GIS)

## Graduate Programs

- We have several graduate programs in which sustainability plays a prominent role (Biodiversity, Regional Planning, Geography) and concentrations/certificates (GIS and Global Health)

## Immersive Experience

- The living learning community on sustainability satisfies the requirements of this credit

## Activity #1

What do we want our students to know about sustainability for their:

- Professional careers?
- Personal life skills?

# Conversation Mapping

1. No talking
2. Write down succinct responses to the questions posed
3. If you see a response that has a connection to yours, draw a line between the two
4. If you want to add to a response, draw a line from that response and add your thought



# Conversation Mapping

1. Split the paper into 4 quadrants
2. Have a person at each corner of the quadrant; summarize the main points embodied in that area, using the black pens
3. Share your findings with the group

# Pathways and Mechanisms

- Targeted goals like:
  - Signing the Green Chemistry Commitment
    - UAC / Chemistry Department... maybe UPPC
    - Specific to one department but significant for our University's culture, identity, and mission.
- <http://www.greenchemistrycommitment.org/>

# Pathways and Mechanisms

- Seed for future changes:
  - Sustainability literacy assessment
    - CAA/UAC/GAC
    - Informs curricular decisions each year. Provide information to faculty interested in developing sustainability literacy in their departments.

<http://www.american.edu/finance/sustainability/Literacy-Assessment.cfm>

[http://www.sustainabilitytest.org/en/sustainability\\_home](http://www.sustainabilitytest.org/en/sustainability_home)

# Pathways and Mechanisms

- Synergistic pathways such as:
  - Developing learning outcomes (University wide or departmental)
    - UPPC/UAC/GAC
    - Goals which merge with other trends at our University such as applied learning and public engagement.

<https://www.pdx.edu/institutional-assessment-council/campus-wide-learning-outcomes>

Portland has developed University wide learning outcomes.

<http://graham.umich.edu/learning/undergraduate-scholars>

For example this Michigan program is focuses on action based learning which fits the applied learning model.

# Activity #2

- Brainstorm ideas in the left column then try to fill in the following columns

Ideas of pathways and mechanisms	Type of pathway or mechanism	Senate council and other stakeholders	How does this meet the objectives of activity 1?	Models to follow?
Sustainability literacy assessment	Seed for future changes	CAA/UAC/GAC		American University